

LEARNING TO WALK IN SUBMISSION

Sunday, March 20, 2011

Text: Ephesians 5:21-33

INTRODUCTION:

George Barna, president and founder of Barna Research Group, commented:

"While it may be alarming to discover that born again Christians are more likely than others to experience a divorce, that pattern has been in place for quite some time. Even more disturbing, perhaps, is that when those individuals experience a divorce many of them feel their community of faith provides rejection rather than support and healing. But the research also raises questions regarding the effectiveness of how churches minister to families. The ultimate responsibility for a marriage belongs to the husband and wife, but the high incidence of divorce within the Christian community challenges the idea that churches provide truly practical and life-changing support for marriages."

When we think in terms of responsibility in the Christian marriage, no other portion of scripture has outlined, in such a concise way, God's divine role for the husband and wife. To focus on the issue of submission alone would be unfortunate to say the least. What Paul intended for the reader goes much further and deeper than the subject of submission. This in way is to diminish the importance of submission. Submission is an integral part of God's plan for marriage. It is not just the submission of the wife to her husband, but also their mutual submission to the Lord. When we understand the two primary words used by Paul in verses 21-24, submission and subjection, we can better understand the divine order for marriage. Let us take a few minutes to examine these words.

➤ "Submission" "to retire, **withdraw**" (hupo, under, eiko, "to yield"), hence, **"to yield, submit,"** is used metaphorically in Heb. 13:17, of "submitting" to spiritual guides in the churches.

1) To resist no longer, but to give way, yield (of combatants)

2) Metaphorically to yield to authority and admonition, to submit.

➤ "Subjection" A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

1) To arrange under, to subordinate

2) To subject, put in subjection

3) To subject one's self, obey

4) To submit to one's control

5) To yield to one's admonition or advice

6) To obey, be subject

It is important to remember that these two words are a part of our daily relationship to Christ. We are submitted to Him as Lord. We are subject to Him as redeemer and savior. The Christian has to decide whether he will arrange his life under the presence and authority of Christ on a daily basis. What results from this form of obedience is a life lived in the Spirit and a life that expresses the love of God towards others.

The key to understanding verses 22-33, is found in verse 21. Paul has reminded the Ephesians of the importance of Walking In Wisdom. Then he tells them, "...submitting to one another in the fear of the God."

The fear that Paul speaks of is best defined in this manner:

Fear of God, as a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere "fear" of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a "fear" which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence, Rom. 8:15, *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"*

And which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God, through the indwelling Spirit of God.

Having admonished believers to be wise by being controlled by the Holy Spirit, Paul now wants to apply that principle to specific relationships. It is easy to live the Spirit-Filled life for a few hours a week while attending church, but it something completely different to live it 24 hours a day. We need to especially to live that reverent life for God in our marriage.

FOUR COMMANDS TO THE WIFE

1. Submit to their husbands as to Christ **(Eph. 5:22).**

This type of submission is different than that which the wife shows the Lord. Her submission to her husband is her service rendered to the Lord.

Genesis 3:16, "... Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

Reminds us that a woman should have hers desires in subjection to her husband. If this is not happening then she will ultimately be in rebellion against her husband.

2. Recognize the headship of their husbands **(Eph. 5:23).**

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Cor 11:3 (NKJV)

3. Be subject to their husbands **(Eph. 5:24).**

¹ Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel--

⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 1 Peter 3:1-4 (NKJV)

4. Respect their husbands **(Eph. 5:33).**

"to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience"

"For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 1Peter 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror." (1 Peter 3:5-6 NKJV)

EIGHT COMMANDS FOR THE HUSBAND

1. To be **head** of the wife (**Eph. 5:23**).

*3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.
1 Cor 11:3 (NKJV)*

For the wife, this means willingly following her husband's leadership in Christ. For the husband, it means putting aside his own interests in order to care for his wife. Submission is rarely a problem in homes where both partners have a strong relationship with Christ and where each is concerned for the happiness of the other.

Notes for Verses 22-24

In Paul's day, women, children, and slaves were to submit to the head of the family -- slaves would submit until they were freed, male children until they grew up, and women and girls their whole lives. Paul emphasized the equality of all believers in Christ (Galatians 3:28), but he did not suggest overthrowing Roman society to achieve it.

Instead, he counseled all believers to submit to one another by choice -- wives to husbands and also husbands to wives; slaves to masters and also masters to slaves; children to parents and also parents to children. This kind of mutual submission preserves order and harmony in the family while it increases love and respect among family members.

2. To **love** their wives as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25).

“...to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing.”
*7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
(1Peter 3:7).*

3. To **love** their wives as their own bodies (**Eph. 5:28, 33**). A reminder that the living body has an innate desire to preserve its own life. We would refer to this as, “..the will to live.” The husband is to have the same attitude toward his wife. Not only to preserve her life, but also to care about her life and its well being. In other words, Men can't just live for themselves.

*21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.
22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.
23 And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”
24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
(Genesis 2:21-24).*

4. To **nourish** (Greek: ektrepho (GSN-1625), bring up, care for, protect, **Eph. 5:29**)
“...to nourish up to maturity, to nourish to nurture, bring up.”
The idea behind “nourishing” is to supply emotionally, physically and spiritually what is necessary to bring our wives along at the same pace as ourselves.

I should want my wife to mature at a level that will not only be pleasing to me, but will glorify God in her life.

*5 The fool folds his hands And consumes his own flesh.
(Eccl 4:5)*

When considering my attitude toward my wife's spiritual growth and nourishment let us as God's men consider how He nourishes us.

*11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.
(Isa 40:11).*

5. To **cherish** (Greek: thalpo (GSN-2282), to foster, warm in one's bosom, to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care, **Eph. 5:29**)

This is the idea of holding on to something that is irreplaceable value. We would never conceive of letting go of, or in any way discarding this most prized possession.

*10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.
(Pr 31:10).*

6. To be **joined** as one flesh (**Eph. 5:30-31**) - to glue upon, glue to, to join one's self to closely, cleave to, stick to.

*Mr 10:7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,
Mr 10:8 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.
1Co 6:16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."*

7. To **leave** their parents for their wives (**Eph. 5:31**) - like our "leave behind", it is used of one who on being called away cannot take another with him, especially of the dying (to leave behind)

*Ge 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Mt 19:5 "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"*

8. To **cleave** to their wives (and the two shall become one flesh) (**Eph. 5:31**)

He shall be glued or cemented to her; and, as a well-glued board will sooner break in the whole wood than in the glued joint, so death alone can part the husband and wife; and nothing but death should dissolve their affection.

What does biblical "cleaving" really look like?

Back off (give her some space).

Be patient (don't rush things).

Love her as you love your own body (that's going to take some work).

Affirm her role in the family (whether she stays home or works outside the home, she's got the most important job in the world).

Pray for her as you've never prayed before (because God hears our prayers).

Lower your expectations (you're not going to see fireworks every night).

Do the little things (without expecting anything in return).

Show her she's the most cherished woman on earth
(she'll probably faint the first time you do this).
Above all, persevere (you're in this for the long haul).
A wise husband builds his mate's self-esteem, realizing
that the subtle words and actions of a sinful world
constantly assault her sense of self-worth. He remains
sensitive to her needs and is always ready to offer his
support.

Encourage your wife verbally and demonstratively.
Words of cheer and praise are high octane fuel that
boost your wife's emotional fuel tanks.